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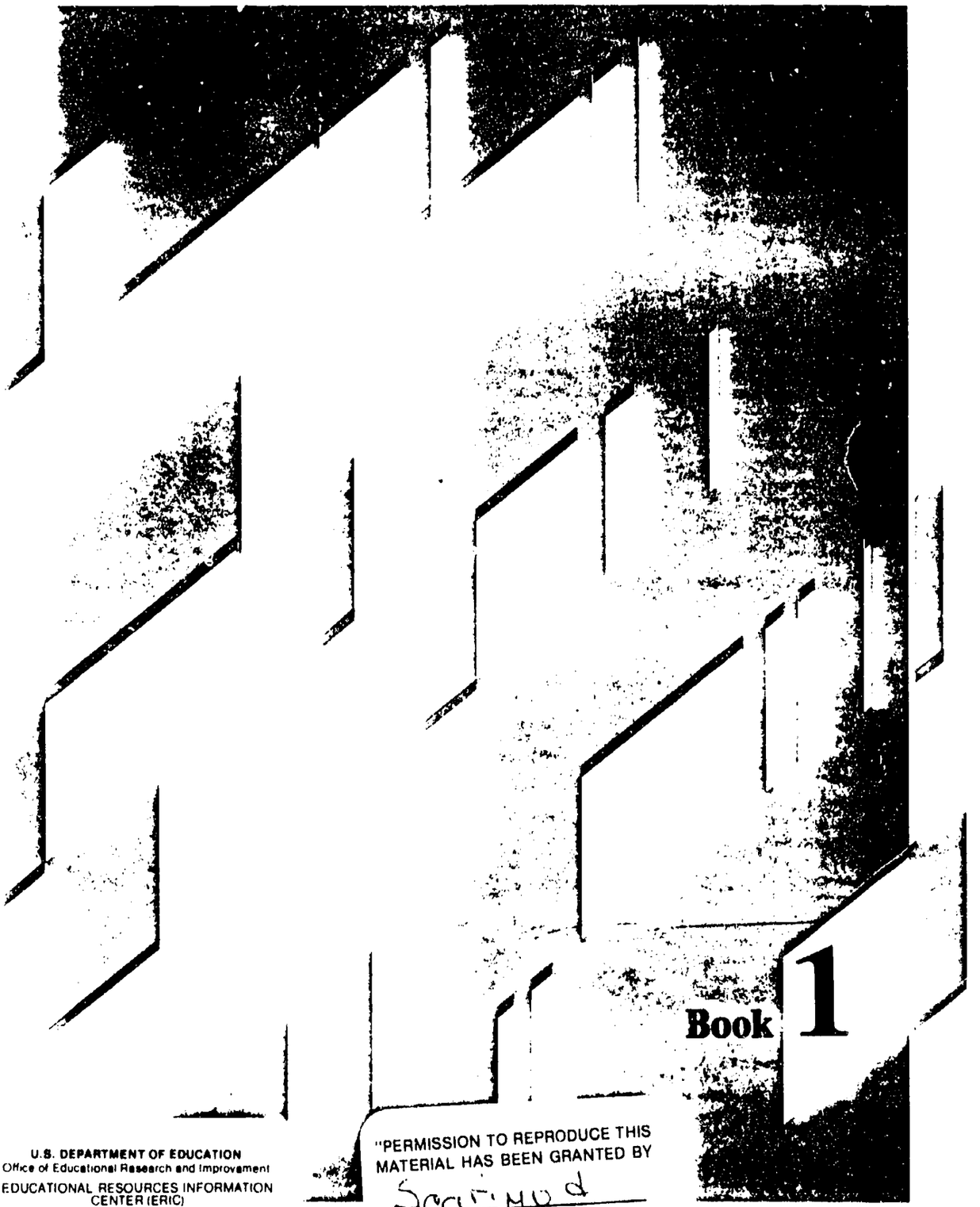
ABSTRACT

The Australian Language Levels (ALL) Project, begun in 1985 to develop an organizational framework and curriculum guidelines for language instruction in elementary and secondary education, offers a coherent model for curriculum design drawing on recent research on teaching and learning. The first volume in the four-volume series outlines the current context of language teaching and learning in Australia. It contains: an overview of the ALL guidelines; discussion of the values of language learning both for the individual and as a national resource; a summary of the ALL Project; a brief discussion of the need for language curriculum renewal; a description of the school language learning context in Australia, including student characteristics, common program types, the range of languages taught, and conditions promoting school language learning; a review of developments in approaches to language teaching and learning, from classical humanism through reconstructionism and progressivism to the balanced approach of the ALL Project; eight principles to guide the teaching and learning process; discussion of the goals of language learning, including their development, broad categories, and integration in the curriculum; and the framework of progressive, interlocking, and age-related instructional stages proposed by the ALL Project. Contains 79 references. (MSE)

Language Learning in Australia



Book 1

Australian Language Levels Guidelines

Book 1

Language Learning in Australia

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Curriculum Development Centre

Language learning in Australia.

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References to the teaching and learning of languages in these guidelines refer to the teaching and learning of languages other than English and English as a second language. The *ALL Guidelines* do not directly address the teaching of 'English' as a subject.

Foreword

In Australia's multicultural society, increasing emphasis is being placed on the importance of language and on the right of all children, whether of English or non-English-speaking background to develop their own language and to learn at least one other. Language proficiency is important for commercial and political interaction with other nations. Languages as a national resource need to be nurtured. In this context the appearance of the *Australian Language Levels (ALL) Guidelines* is particularly significant. The philosophy of the *ALL Guidelines* is consistent with the spirit and principles of the *National Policy on Languages Report,* which has strongly influenced the Commonwealth Government in its provision of resources for languages education.

The ALL Project was set up early in 1985 to harness, in a cooperative and consultative way, the energy and expertise of those involved in the teaching of languages at primary and secondary levels throughout Australia, and to develop an organisational framework and curriculum guidelines.

The *ALL Guidelines* present a coherent model for languages curriculum design, which draws comprehensively on the latest research and developments in the teaching and learning of languages.

Many individuals and groups have contributed to this cooperative enterprise. A National Reference Group of state and territory representatives monitored and advised on developments. All state and territory government education departments have cooperated in the organisation of inservice activities, in the trialling of materials, and in the provision of officers to liaise with the Adelaide-based writing team. The Education Department of South Australia has contributed substantial funding to supplement resources provided through the Curriculum Development Centre.

I am very pleased to recommend the use of the *ALL Guidelines* in the context of cooperative curriculum development and current educational needs in Australia.

Brent Corish
Director
Curriculum Development Centre

Acknowledgements

The ALL Project team recognised from the outset the importance of consultation with languages personnel across Australia in the development of the *ALL Guidelines*. We wish to acknowledge the ideas and comments contributed by the many language teachers, advisers, consultants, and members of various professional associations.

The team is particularly grateful to Dr Anne Martin for recognising the need for guidelines in the languages area, gathering support for the concept, and successfully seeking funding for the ALL Project. Dr Martin has supported the team at all times, and provided guidance and detailed reactions to proposals and materials.

Dr John Clark was the Coordinator of the ALL Project from August 1985 to January 1986. He gave shape to the Project, undertook consultations across Australia, and initiated the writing task. Over the past two years he has continued to provide invaluable guidance, feedback, and encouragement as a consultant.

The Project team has benefited greatly from the advice of its consultants: Professor Michael Halliday (University of Sydney), Dr David Ingram (Brisbane CAE), and Dr Paul Tuffin (SACAE).

Thanks are due to the Project's Management Group, chaired initially by Mr John Steinle (Director General, Education Department of SA) and subsequently by Mr Bill Hannan (Chairman, State Board of Education, Victoria).

The Project's National Reference Group has consisted of representatives from each state/territory Education Department: Gisela Birch (WA), Kerry Fairbairn (Qld), Adrian Harmsen (Tas), Ruben Ketchell and subsequently Connie Andreana (Vic), Inara McAlister (NSW), Lea McAuley and subsequently Roberta McRae (ACT), Anne Martin (chairperson) and subsequently Peter Mickan (SA), and Ruza Ruzic (NT). It has also included Ian Welch and subsequently Roy Quill, representing CDC, and John Deane, representing the AFMLTA. The role of the Reference Group was to make suggestions and react to the ALL Project proposals and materials, and to provide a link between the Project team and languages personnel in their particular state/territory. They have disseminated information on the ALL Project, organised state/territory reference groups and provided extensive support and advice.

In Canberra, the team acknowledges the support of Dr Kerry Kennedy and the Publications Unit of the Curriculum Development Centre.

In South Australia, the team acknowledges the contributions of Pamela Morley (Project writer from October 1985 to May 1986), the LOTE and ESL advisory teams, the Early Childhood Unit and the Publications Branch of the SA Education Department, the Catholic Education Office, and the Aboriginal Studies Key Centre at SACAE (Underdale Campus).

Acknowledgement is also made of the cooperation, mutual support, and contributions of those who worked on the *National Assessment Framework for Languages at Senior Secondary Level* (Senior Secondary Assessment Board of SA).

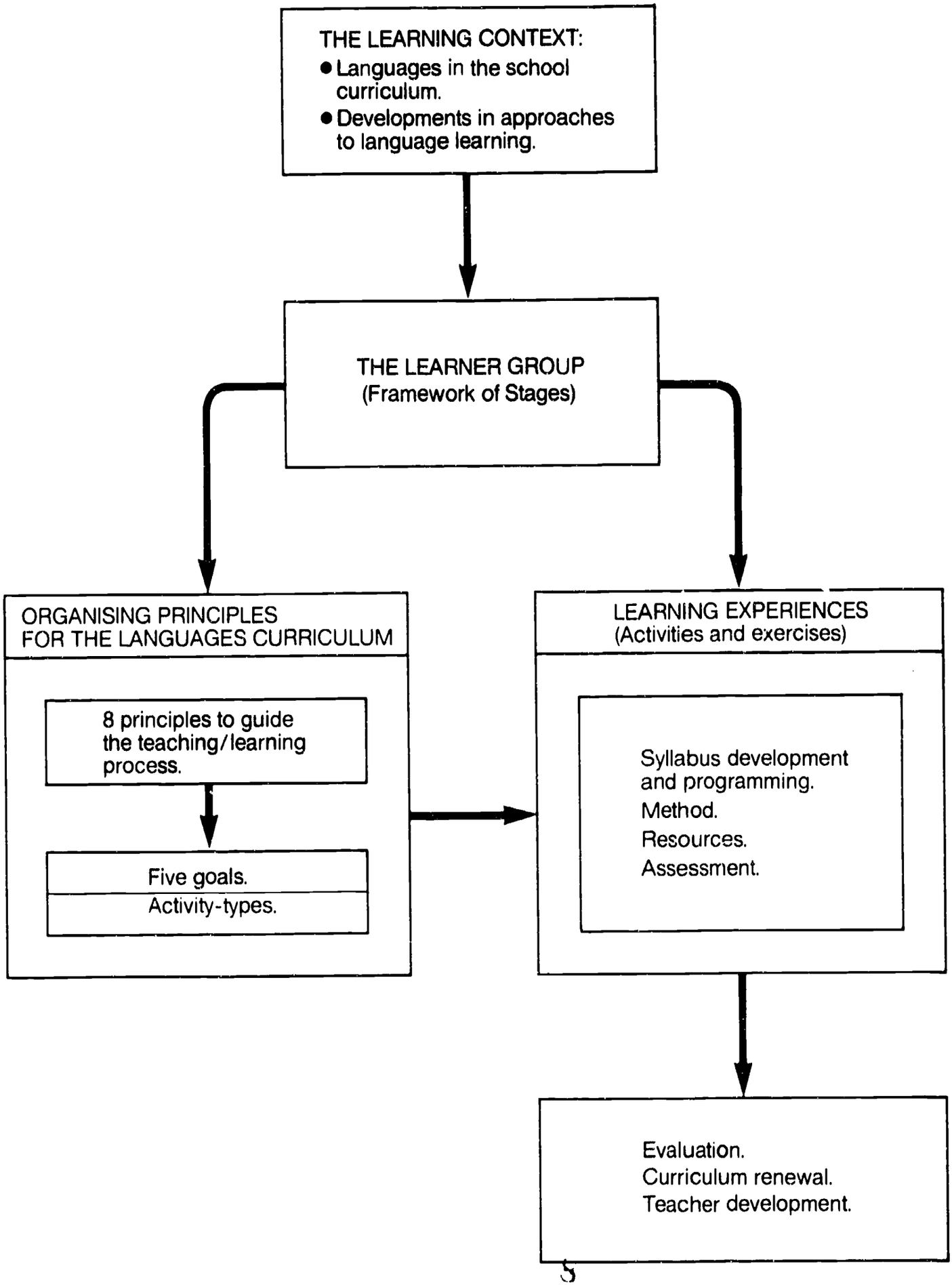
Last, but by no means least, the team thanks the clerical officers, Loretta Battistella, Rosie D'Aloia, Letitia Brunner, and Rita Palumbo for their unending enthusiasm, patience and skill.

Angela Scarino
David Vale
Penny McKay

December 1987.

Contents

A glossary of terms used in the *ALL Guidelines* is provided in Book 4.


THE LEARNING CONTEXT:
● Languages in the school curriculum.
● Developments in approaches to language learning.
THE LEARNER GROUP
(Framework of Stages)
ORGANISING PRINCIPLES
FOR THE LANGUAGES CURRICULUM
8 principles to guide the teaching/learning process.
Five goals.
Activity-types.
LEARNING EXPERIENCES
(Activities and exercises)
Syllabus development and programming.
Method.
Resources.
Assessment.
Evaluation.
Curriculum renewal.
Teacher development.

The Essence of ALL

The curriculum model presented in the *ALL Guidelines* has been developed for school language learning, and is based on good classroom practice and developments in approaches to language teaching and learning. It advocates a learner-centred approach. Learner characteristics are described, and language syllabuses and programs are organised by means of a proposed Framework of progressive, age-related Stages.

The ALL languages curriculum focuses on the nature of language learning, which is described through eight principles of language teaching/learning. Learners engage in a range of learning experiences (both activities and supporting exercises) which involve purposeful language use. Activities are designed to help learners work towards common goals of language learning, outlined in five broad areas. Activities are categorised into six activity-types, in order to ensure a spread of language use and cover a range of contexts and purposes.

The eight principles, the five goals, and the activity-types are the organising principles of the ALL languages curriculum. They influence the content of learning (planned in syllabuses and programs), as well as the process of learning (described in terms of teaching method, resources, and assessment).

The ALL curriculum is dynamic, and subject to constant refinement through 'curriculum renewal'. This is an evolutionary process of critical evaluation which enables teachers to fine-tune the curricular skills that they use to design and implement language programs. It is in this way that their programs become increasingly responsive to the needs and interests of learners.

The diagram on the opposite page highlights those components of the ALL languages curriculum which are the focus of this book.

Rationale for Language Learning

Australia has always been a multilingual society. Before British settlement, Aboriginal and Islander communities spoke some 200–250 distinct languages. During the colonial era, migration from Europe, Asia, and the Pacific region saw the introduction of many languages other than English, while after World War II, the huge influx of migrants from Europe led to an increase as well as a diversification of the communities who spoke a language other than English. Today, almost 2.5 million Australians use a language other than English as their first language, while some 4 million are of non-English-speaking-background. They include old established groups (e.g. the Chinese), those who arrived after World War II (e.g. Greeks, Italians, Latvians, and Lithuanians), and groups of more recent arrivals (e.g. Vietnamese and Kampucheans).

Such linguistic and cultural diversity was not always regarded with favour by the dominant English-speaking population, and attempts were made at times to suppress the use of languages other than English in Australia and to assimilate all migrants into a homogeneous English-speaking society. Such ideas have now given way to policies which promote a multilingual, multicultural society and acknowledge the enrichment which a wide variety of languages and cultures brings to Australia.

It is now recognised that all Australian children have the right to continue to learn at school the language spoken in their home. Similarly, it is recognised that all Australian children need to learn English. The result for children whose home language is not English is that they should have the right to learn at least two languages. Perhaps as a consequence of this, a further right has come to be recognised: that of monolingual English-speaking-background children to learn a language other than English. This issue is endorsed and elaborated in the Federal Government's *National Policy on Languages Report* (Lo Bianco 1987).

Language learning for the individual

Learning a second language offers learners the potential to:

- communicate in the target language
- enhance their intellectual and social development
- enhance their understanding of their first language and culture
- expand their knowledge, and approach tasks with insights gained from another language and culture
- participate in the life of another culture, and gain an understanding of both the specificities of other languages and cultures and of the commonality of human existence
- enhance their own self esteem
- develop their sense of social justice
- enhance their vocational prospects.

For non-English-speaking-background learners learning English as a second language, there remains also the question of their fundamental need and right to be able to participate in all aspects of Australian society by having an adequate command of the national language, English.

Languages as a national resource

Languages are seen not only as being able to contribute to an individual learner's intellectual, social, and affective development, but also as a national resource which serves communities within Australia, enriches Australian society as a whole, and enables the nation to engage in commercial, industrial, and diplomatic enterprises on an international scale.

Political and economic shifts in power and rapidly changing technology have made the understanding of other languages and cultures an essential factor in successful commercial and political activity. If we wish to buy from our trading partners they will speak to us in English. If we are buying or selling, we should speak their languages and understand their cultures. Australia has its own unique set of geopolitical concerns, and its language learning programs should reflect this fact. It is not a question of merely training translators and interpreters, but also of Australians from all walks of life speaking a second language. This will enable Australians to operate more confidently and efficiently in the international sphere.

The linguistic diversity of the population is a valuable national resource which should be nurtured, promoted, and used both for social and economic purposes within Australia and internationally.

There is clearly a case in Australia for the provision within the broad education system (including 'Saturday' schools, 'ethnic' schools, minority language schools, etc.) of a whole range of languages. These include:

- languages of international importance
- languages spoken within the various non-English-speaking-background communities in Australia
- languages of geopolitical importance
- languages which may reflect more individual concerns.

The ALL Project

The ALL Project was established to develop a national approach to language teaching and learning. It represents an endeavour to coordinate the energy, expertise, and experience of many people involved in languages education in Australia including classroom teachers, teacher trainers, syllabus writers and planners, educational administrators, and statutory assessment bodies. It seeks to break down the sometimes artificial barriers that exist between individual languages, among states and territories, between different areas of the curriculum (languages other than English and English as a second language, for example), between the primary and secondary levels, and between theory and actual classroom practice. Again, such coordination and cooperation is strongly advocated in the *National Policy on Languages Report* (Lo Bianco 1987). The ALL Project aims:

- to produce a curriculum framework and guidelines, based on common principles of teaching and learning and common goals which reflect theoretical insights and the wisdom of teacher experience
- to establish a process through which curriculum renewal in languages might be effected on an interstate basis within Australia
- to ensure that, through the common curriculum guidelines, all languages are accorded equal esteem
- to enable the language policies of the individual states and territories of Australia (where available) to be put into curriculum practice, thereby increasing access to language learning for all learners
- to foster the sharing of national expertise and resources
- to foster cooperation across languages
- to assist teachers and learners to determine programs which are more responsive to their varying needs.

It is acknowledged that there can be no such thing as an ideal languages curriculum for all times and all circumstances. The ALL Project attempts to embody what is seen as current wisdom about language teaching and learning, and sets this out in an organisational framework and curriculum guidelines designed to enable those engaged in languages education to develop or renew the curriculum for a particular language, so that it remains relevant in its particular context, and continues to meet the needs of the particular learning group for which it is designed. The *ALL Guidelines* comprise a set of four books. These are entitled:

1. *Language Learning in Australia*
2. *Syllabus Development and Programming*
3. *Method, Resources, and Assessment*
4. *Evaluation, Curriculum Renewal, and Teacher Development*

They are intended for use by:

- language teachers in primary and secondary schools
- syllabus writers, curriculum developers, and consultants concerned with the languages curriculum in primary and secondary schools
- teacher inservice educators
- assessment authority personnel working on the creation of syllabuses and assessment schemes
- teacher educators in tertiary institutions
- preservice students.

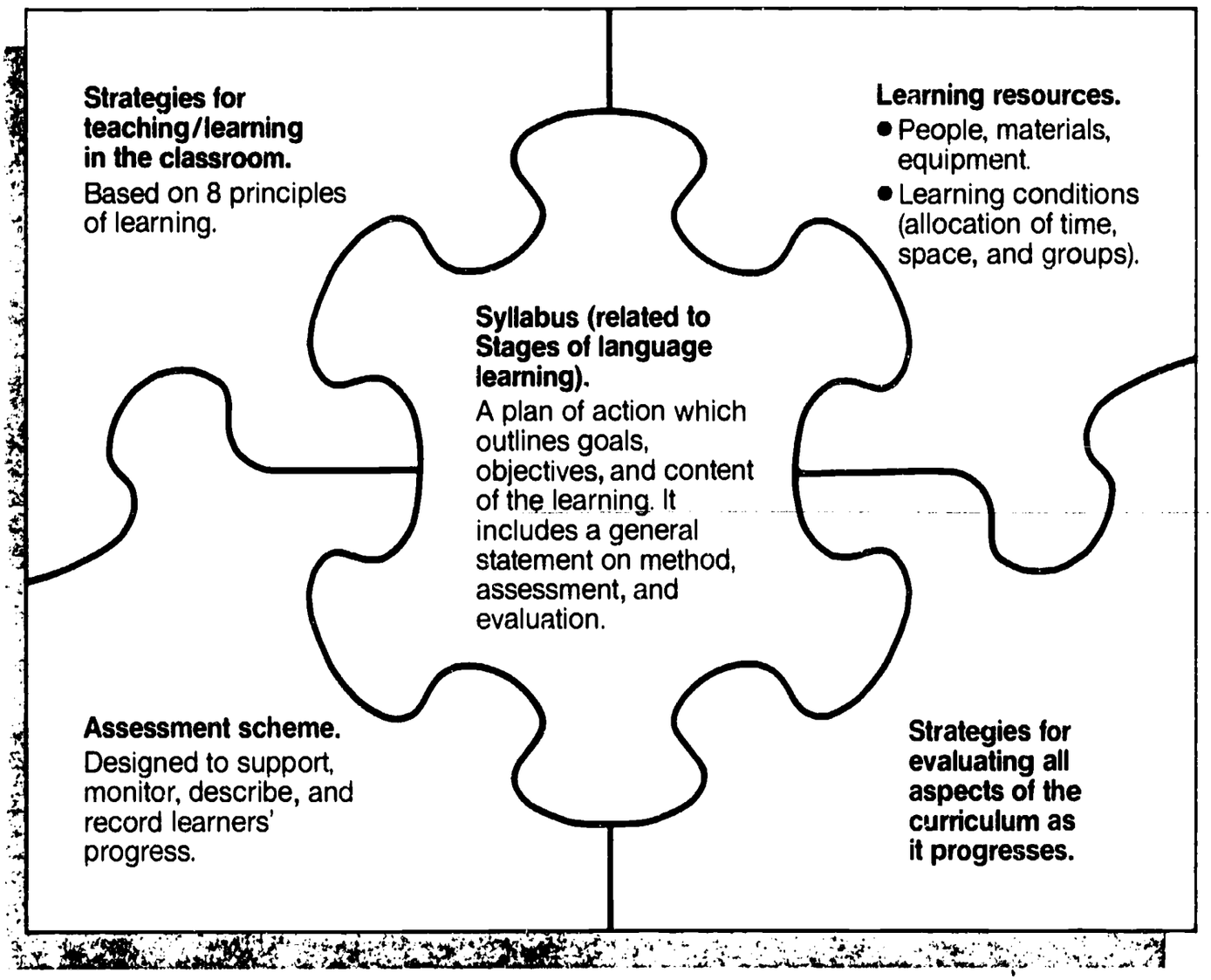
The *ALL Guidelines* will assist the above groups to carry out their various curriculum related tasks as effectively as possible within the requirements of their particular system or establishment. The *ALL Guidelines* should be regarded as a set of proposals which are subject to flexible interpretation. Their relevance and appropriateness can only be judged in the light of classroom realities. As perceptions about what is meant by the 'languages curriculum' change, and further developments occur, it is expected that the *ALL Guidelines* will be viewed within the context of such changing perceptions and developments, and will undergo appropriate renewal.

The languages curriculum needs to be viewed within the context of a broad theory of education. This will influence decisions made regarding all areas of the school curriculum, including the languages curriculum.

Curriculum Renewal

The ALL Project views the languages curriculum as a jigsaw of interlocking parts.

The curriculum jigsaw



No one part of the curriculum jigsaw can exist in isolation; all parts are inextricably interrelated. A change to any one part of the curriculum will have an effect on all other parts; a change in assessment practices, for example, will inevitably lead to changes in classroom practices, just as changes in the content of a language learning program will logically lead to changes in assessment procedures.

There will always be a need to constantly fine-tune any approach to curriculum design in the light of classroom experience and further research into language learning and language acquisition. The ALL Project has adopted the term 'curriculum renewal' to describe this process of continuous fine-tuning.

The ALL Project proposes an evolutionary or 'action research' model of curriculum renewal which involves teachers, either as individuals or as members of an

interested group, in 'renewing' their own curriculum with the help of the *ALL Guidelines*. Action research involves the analysis of a problem, followed by a search for and experimentation with possible solutions, reflection on the process and the outcomes, and a reanalysis of the situation, leading to further experimentation in a continuous spiral of renewal.

The term 'evolution' implies that change will occur over a long period of time, during which the focus of attention at any one moment of time might be limited to one area of the curriculum only, but where it is acknowledged from the start that any change in this particular area of the curriculum will inevitably have an effect upon other areas, which, in turn will also require attention. The implication here is that those agencies which promote change in education must acknowledge the need for a sustained, evolutionary effort over a period of time, rather than a single massive upheaval followed by a long period of relative inactivity. (Book 4 provides more detailed information on the process of curriculum renewal).

Languages in the School Curriculum

The language learners

Australian learners of languages other than English can be divided into two major groups:

- those who *do not* have a home background in the target language
- those who *do* have a home background in the target language.

The approach adopted in teaching the first group is relatively simple, as all such learners are learning a second language. If the language being learnt is one which is widely used in the local community, learners will have the advantage of access to human and material resources which would not otherwise be available.

In the case of the second category matters are not so simple. Learners within this category are often referred to as 'first language' learners. If 'first language' is understood to mean the first language learned by the child, then this designation is probably correct. If, however, 'first language' is taken as meaning the learner's dominant language, then the designation may or may not be correct. It is for this reason that the term 'background-speakers' is preferred. It is used in the *ALL Guidelines* to refer to those learners who have a home background in the target language. The language abilities of learners in this category cover a wide spectrum of differing and changing balances between the home language and English. Even at the point of first contact with school the differences in balance are evident. Learners range from those whose experience of English is non-existent (and who may or may not be literate in the home language) to those whose ability in the home language is limited to comprehending what is said within the home in relation to a limited number of 'household' topics.

As schooling has its effect, it is likely that those learners who arrived at school either fully dominant or almost dominant in the home language will become less so. They may become dominant in English, or they may become balanced bilinguals with equivalent ability in each language. No matter what the capacity of the learner with a home background in the language to use the language, there is always likely to be a major difference between learners in this group and learners who have no home background in the language. Learners with some home background in the language are likely to have experience and understanding of the sociocultural context of the language.

Australian learners of English as a second language include the following categories:

- recent arrivals with virtually no English skills, and 'first phase' learners (those learners who are in the early stages of learning English)
- 'second or third phase learners' (the former term usually refers to post first phase learners who can meet the language demands of most classroom activities, and the latter usually refers to learners who function at levels somewhat similar to comparable fluent background-speakers, but experience difficulty in some situations (after Campbell 1984).

Each of these groups (learners of languages other than English, and learners of English as a second language) has different and changing needs which require different kinds of programs; it is desirable that schools build upon the language experiences which the learners bring from home, and that they promote the potential talents of all learners.

A considerable amount of research exists on the optimal age for the introduction of a second language and several findings have emerged. It appears that different aspects of language are learnt better at different ages. Older learners seem to learn grammar and vocabulary better than younger learners (Donoghue 1979). In addition, they appear to learn syntax and morphology better than younger learners (Krashen, Long, Scarcella 1979). Younger learners on the other hand are better at acquiring

accurate pronunciation (Clyne 1981). Proficiency reached is related to a certain extent to the amount of exposure time, even though this is not the only factor; it appears that learners who begin a language at an earlier age will ultimately reach a higher proficiency. Older learners learn some aspects of language at a faster rate and more efficiently than younger ones. Young learners, however, seem more ready to learn a new language because they appear to be less self-conscious and have a less rigid sense of identity. The total amount of time spent on learning and the possible development of more favourable attitudes towards other languages and cultures are factors which favour the introduction of languages at an early age.

For learners *without* a home background in the language, introduction to languages other than English may begin at any age. The longer the exposure, the greater the benefits. For learners *with* a home background in the language, it is preferable to arrange entry points as close as possible to the beginning of formal schooling, in order to avoid a possible break in their cognitive development (through lack of initial ability in English) and not to lose, through disuse, the valuable language resource which they bring to the school from their home.

The best types of programs for learners with a home background in the language are bilingual programs which, ideally, should continue in some form until the end of compulsory schooling. The ideal linguistic outcome for learners with a home background in the language is that they become truly bilingual by the end of their formal compulsory education. Though difficult to achieve, it could be argued that this might also be an ideal outcome for learners without a home background in the language.

Programs in schools

The types of language program offered vary according to several factors:

- the age of the learners
- their previous experience in the target language
- their home language and culture
- their social, educational, and vocational needs.

Programs for learners who have a background in the target language (sometimes called 'mother tongue' or 'first language' programs), are designed to develop and maintain the language capacities of learners for whom the target language is the dominant or only language. Not all non-English-speaking-background learners may in fact be able to speak the language of their home environment, and decisions about the types of program to be offered need to be made on the basis of learners' proficiency in the target language.

Programs for learners who do not have a background in the target language (often called 'second language' programs), are designed to introduce learners to a language with which they have little or no familiarity. Second language programs include the following:

Limited exposure programs

The most common programs at both primary and secondary levels in Australian schools are the traditional limited exposure programs where languages other than English are taught and learned as second languages and as subjects in their own right. These courses are generally offered alike to students with or without a home background in the language.

English as a second language (ESL) programs

The most common types of ESL programs offered in both primary and secondary schools are:

- Intensive programs in English in special schools for non-English-speaking-background learners who have recently arrived from overseas either as refugees or as migrants. Learners are prepared here for their eventual move to a mainstream school.
- General support ESL programs, where non-English-speaking-background learners (recent arrivals as well as learners who were born in Australia and who speak English as a second language) are supported either by specialist ESL teachers or by class teachers who employ teaching strategies which enable learners to develop skills in English as they study general classroom subjects.

Bilingual programs

A bilingual program involves the use of a language other than English as the medium of instruction for specific subjects. There are different types of bilingual programs for different target groups:

- Transitional bilingual programs are designed to assist non-English-speaking-background learners to learn to study in English without retarding their general educational progress. Instruction is gradually transferred from the learners' home language to English as their English improves. Many Aboriginal schools offer such programs.
- Bilingual immersion programs are designed to maximise second language learners' exposure to the target language. The degree of immersion can vary from partial to total immersion, depending on how much of the curriculum is taught in the target language.
- Hybrid programs combine two or more types of bilingual programs in order to tailor a course to meet the needs of particular groups of learners (e.g. a transitional bilingual program can be phased into a home language maintenance and development program to assist learners to retain their home language skills).

The range of languages

The following factors influence decisions about the range of languages to be taught in a particular school:

- the particular needs and interests of the learners
- the support of the school community, including the school council, the principal, and the staff
- the educational philosophy of the school
- the wishes and expectations of parents
- opportunities for continuity of language learning from pre-school to junior primary, junior primary to primary, primary to secondary, and lower secondary to senior secondary (including the question of which languages are available in neighbouring schools)
- the availability of teacher expertise and material resources
- the policies and guidelines of the education system.

When planning the introduction of a new program or a new language, it is important that a process of consultation take place in order that the language(s) most relevant to learners' needs and interests are chosen.

Conditions which promote language learning in schools

Ideally, language is best acquired in a 'natural setting' within a community which speaks that language. This is of course the way in which people learn their first language. Research shows that proficiency thus gained can be further enhanced with structured support at strategic optimal learning times (see Long 1985, a, b, and c).

For most second language learners, however, this ideal is impossible. An approach to school language learning that approximates as closely as possible the setting in which a language is learnt naturally, and which also provides the necessary structured support at optimal learning times needs, therefore, to be developed. Language learning is promoted when:

- all learners have access to language programs, irrespective of their age, sex, ethnic origin or linguistic ability
- the different needs of the linguistically varied groups of learners in language programs are accommodated
- there is a choice of languages
- the choice of language(s) and the type(s) of program(s) offered are determined in consultation with the total school community and with regard to school and systemic policies and the availability of teacher expertise and material resources
- bilingual programs are supported wherever possible
- frequent and adequate contact time for language learning is allocated and there is provision for continuity of language learning (the following weekly time allocations, although not ideal, appear to be reasonably adequate: *90 minutes* per week in primary schools (for a minimum of 4 years to enable learners to

complete either Stage B or Stage D (see Book 2), *200 minutes* per week in junior secondary school (for a minimum of 3 years to enable learners to complete at least one, and preferably two Stages at junior secondary level), rising to *280 minutes* per week in year 12)

- the practical nature of language learning and the complexity of the composition of groups of learners are taken into account when class sizes are determined (a maximum of twenty learners per class is considered desirable)
- specialist areas are set aside in the school for language learning, and adequate resources are provided
- continuing professional development of language teachers (through such means as participation in inservice at school and at system level, professional reading and discussion, team teaching, observation days in other schools, and other curriculum renewal activities) is encouraged and supported
- cross-curricular initiatives which enable teachers and learners to explore the links that exist between learning experiences in different subject areas are encouraged and supported
- information sharing and activities which encourage positive attitudes towards the target language and involve learners, other teachers, parents, and the wider community are encouraged and supported
- neighbouring primary and secondary schools work together to provide a rational and continuous languages program in the locality
- there is provision for continuous review and renewal of the languages curriculum.

Developments in Approaches to Language Teaching and Learning

It is possible to describe three major philosophies underlying current languages curricula. Two of these (which both stress the importance of teaching languages for communication) can be viewed as being deliberate reactions to the third (the 'traditional' languages curriculum with its roots in the study of grammar, translation, and literature). A brief analysis of each of these three divergent approaches will enable us to establish the roots from which the ALL Project's curriculum proposals emerge. The ALL Project proposes a reconciliation of the best features of each of the various approaches, and the incorporation of these features into a broader curriculum model based on the principles of teaching and learning that the ALL Project has developed.

The approaches can be seen to derive from three different educational value systems which Skilbeck (1982) has identified as 'classical humanism', 'reconstructionism', and 'progressivism'. It is recognised that such a conceptualisation of evolutionary educational philosophies into three broad categories is an arbitrary one. It does nonetheless constitute a convenient framework for examining contemporary trends in language teaching and learning. Although each of the three broad value systems permeate the entire educational process, it is only with their effects on the languages curriculum that we are concerned here. (For a further analysis of the three approaches and their effects on language teaching, see Clark 1987).

What follows is an attempt to trace briefly the differences to which these three approaches give rise in the areas of syllabus design, teaching method, and assessment techniques. An outline of the main disadvantages of each approach is also provided.

Classical humanism

Syllabus design

Broadly speaking, the classical humanist approach to syllabus design is content-oriented. It views the language being learned as subject matter, and sets out to analyse the language into its constituent parts (i.e. phonological elements, grammatical structures, and vocabulary). It then sequences these from what are deemed to be the simple elements to learn to what are deemed to be the more complex ones, and a common approach is to weave each of them into contrived texts. Learners are required to go through the texts and master the elements and rules through conscious understanding and practice of them, one after the other, and to apply their accumulated knowledge to the translation of texts into and out of the target language.

Languages with a reputedly high profile of literary, social, historical, and cultural achievements are preferred to what are seen as less prestigious languages. Language learning in the classical humanist approach is a normal part of the curriculum for more able learners, but in English-speaking countries is not always offered to or taken up by the less able.

Teaching method

School language learning in the classical humanist approach is typified by the emphasis placed on the importance of the analysis of grammar, the classifying of its parts of speech, the conscious understanding of its rules, the memorisation of these rules, the learning by heart of vocabulary items, and the reassembly of all this knowledge in the translation of texts into and out of the target language. Skills of analysis are promoted through the reading of literary texts and the subsequent critical appreciation of them. The ability to communicate in everyday situations is often viewed simply as a useful by-product of the more academic aims.

Assessment techniques

Assessment in the classical humanist approach is traditionally norm-referenced and based on end-of-term and end-of-year tests. It is used essentially as an instrument for

selecting learners for the next level of education, or for placing them into homogeneous groups.

Test items involve the use of learners' general intellectual capacities in the completion of grammar problems, interpretation exercises, translations, etc. The tendency is to set a common examination for all learners in a particular age-group at the end of each term or year. Although several questions may be set to cover the subject matter studied (e.g. a grammar test, a translation, a reading comprehension, etc.), it is common for examination marks (usually in the form of a percentage) to be totalled together to give an aggregate for the subject. This is seen as a statement not only of achievement in that subject, but also of intellectual ability. Learners are placed in rank order on the basis of their aggregate mark, and graded in relation to each other along normal distribution curves.

Disadvantages of the classical humanist approach

Classical humanist teaching method does not necessarily enable learners to converse spontaneously in forms appropriate to context, because it concentrates on written language and on the conscious application of rules. The approach is concerned with linguistic knowledge and analytical skills rather than communicative ability.

The classical humanist norm-referenced form of assessment provides little information as to what learners can or cannot do. Rather, it indicates how the individual learner has performed in relation to others in a group. It therefore fails to effectively inform those involved as to whether learning objectives are being achieved or not. Teachers using the classical humanist approach often tend to confuse achievement with ability and assume that learners with a certain grade in terms of achievement are also at that level in terms of ability.

Many learners are discouraged by the academic emphasis of this approach and opt out of language learning at the first opportunity.

Reconstructionism

Syllabus design

Reconstructionism is concerned with the social uses of language and with promoting a usable communicative ability among learners. The overall goal of school language learning in a reconstructionist approach is the promotion of intranational and international unity. Languages education is seen as an effective means for breaking down social, political, ethnic, and national barriers, and for working towards better intercultural and internationcal understanding. It is usual for the languages of importance to the social, political, and economic concerns of the nation to be fostered. In a reconstructionist approach, languages are taught to all learners, irrespective of their ability. Language learning is generally compulsory for a set period of time, after which it becomes optional.

The reconstructionist approach is goal-oriented. Its content is derived from an analysis of what are taken to be the communicative needs of the learners. What is taught is determined by what the learner is expected to be able to do with the language by the end of the stage of learning in question. Goals are expressed as behavioural objectives, rather than as knowledge objectives (e.g. 'to be able to order a meal' rather than 'the conditional tense and vocabulary related to food and drink').

In the reconstructionist syllabus, as in the classical humanist one, all content is selected and sequenced in advance of the classroom teaching/learning process, and has to be mastered element by element in a cumulative manner. New categories have had to be introduced, however, to add to the existing categories of phonology, grammar, and vocabulary, in order to reflect 'communicative needs'. These have included such categories as situations or contexts, themes and topics, and functions and notions, all of which help to describe what learners are expected to do with the language elements that they are being asked to learn.

Teaching method

There are two versions of reconstructionist teaching method. The earlier version (the audiolingual/audiovisual method) is associated with behaviourist psychology and structural linguistics, and emphasises the formation of good language habits through repetition and the mechanical drilling of structures. These are presented in the form of an idealised dialogue incorporating the particular structures and vocabulary to be learnt. They are then practised in the form of drills and exercises, and the dialogue is reproduced (or an analagous one is reconstructed) by the learner.

The earlier reconstructionist method also places great stress on the practice of the four 'macro-skills' (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), which are regarded as separate psychological processes requiring separate treatment.

The later version of the reconstructionist approach replaces the emphasis on structures with an emphasis on meanings (functions and notions), and places the practice of skills within the sort of 'situations' that the learner is thought to be likely to encounter when using the language being learnt. In later reconstructionist method there is much rehearsal of predetermined goals in role-play form. Learners rehearse such situations as 'getting a meal', or 'finding the way'. The prime focus of attention moves from structures to meanings, and there is sometimes little or no emphasis on mastery of the grammar system per se.

Assessment techniques

The reconstructionist approach to assessment is generally criterion-referenced and aims to provide explicit information about what learners can and cannot do by measuring their individual performances against well defined criteria, rather than against the performance of others in the group, as is the case with norm-referenced assessment.

Formative tests are created to measure the extent to which lesson or unit objectives are being mastered, in order to guide the further teaching and learning processes. Where individual weaknesses are diagnosed, appropriate remedial treatment is provided before learners move from one lesson or unit to the next. Assessment thus becomes integrated into the teaching/learning process, rather than being an event that takes place only at the end of an extended period of time.

Within criterion-referenced schemes, it is common for a subject to be divided into various dimensions or domains each representing a crucial behavioural target. In language learning, the dimensions have often been seen in terms of the four macro-skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), although alternative and additional dimensions (such as various combinations of the macro-skills) have been suggested.

Test items are devised to sample each of the dimensions chosen. Where there are several dimensions within a subject, it is usual to report on student performance in profile form, showing what learners can do in each dimension, and how well they can do it.

Disadvantages of the reconstructionist approach

The earlier reconstructionist method (audiolingual/audiovisual), based on the promotion of good language habits through repetition and drills, can destroy learners' motivation, for it does not enable learners to use structures spontaneously outside the drill situation. The later reconstructionist emphasis on rehearsal and role-play of phrases related to predictable situations often does not seem to enable learners to go beyond regurgitation of the phrases they have learnt as formulae for solving particular problems in particular contexts. They find themselves unable to cope with the 'unpredictable' in everyday communication.

The reconstructionist attempt to specify targets and levels of performance in advance of the teaching/learning process can be regarded as turning the teacher and examiner into servants of the syllabus, whose task it is to bring about behavioural changes in learners in a stereotypical manner. Neither teachers nor learners are considered as individuals with a right to teach and learn in mutually responsive ways towards ends to which they themselves aspire.

In practice, it has not always been possible to specify some of the more important targets towards which school language learners should aspire in as explicit a way as would be necessary for criterion-referenced assessment to work effectively.

It has also been recognised that individual variations in language use make it practically impossible to prescribe levels of performance or levels of proficiency in any simple predetermined verbal form. The best that has as yet been attempted on the basis of current knowledge, are scales such as the Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating (ASLPR) scale (Ingram 1984) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) scale (ACTFL 1981). These scales suggest broad descriptions of performance (covering such features as the range of situations in which the learner can operate, syntax, lexis, discourse, pronunciation, register sensitivity and flexibility, and cultural factors), and attempt to describe the complexities of language and its development. One of the difficulties in applying such broad scales to the performance of school language learners is that their progress from one level of the scale to the next is generally very slow. There also exists the problem that it is extremely difficult to describe school language learners as being at a certain

level of proficiency' when the rate of development in each of the components which make up language proficiency may also differ markedly for individual learners.

Progressivism

Syllabus design

Where classical humanist syllabus design is content-oriented, and that of reconstructionism goal-oriented, progressivist syllabus design is oriented towards 'process', placing its emphasis on teaching method and procedure. The progressivist approach encourages individuals to choose which language(s) they wish to learn in response to their own needs and aspirations, rather than having languages of geopolitical, sociopolitical, or cultural significance imposed on them.

Teaching method

Progressivist method tends to establish a set of principles of procedure which are designed to enable learners to learn language through being actively involved in understanding and producing speech and writing in communicative activities which are relevant to them. These principles of procedure are concerned with ensuring that there is scope for learners to inquire, discuss, reflect, and create their own ever evolving hypotheses concerning the language phenomena they meet. Learners are engaged in finding out things for themselves, in making choices, in taking risks, in working together with others, and in using their growing communicative capacity to undertake new challenges from which they acquire further knowledge and experience in problem solving.

The teacher's task is to set up activities which enable learners to infer meaning from context on the basis of their existing knowledge of the world, of how it works, and of how communication between people normally takes place. On the basis of these inferences, learners are gradually able to build up a context-sensitive language resource which will expand in response to the communicative demands that they encounter. Learners are provided with opportunities to try out their hypotheses as to how the language can be used to create meaning, so that they can learn from the feedback provided by those with whom they communicate. Errors are seen as a natural part of learning.

A progressivist syllabus is in effect a graded series of communicative activities which permit learners to receive and to process comprehensible language, and to participate in communication. Learning is not seen as a matter of deliberately mastering a predetermined linear series of structures or of exponents related to particular functions and notions in particular contexts. It is seen rather as a process in which the learner is internalising a large number of items at the same time. The learner will have several of these gestating at various levels of imperfection (all gradually improving through continuing exposure to them in other contexts).

This is a gradualist approach to learning, where the language that is learnt, and the order in which the learning occurs, is under the control of the learner. It is also a function of what the learner intends to do in the language received, and of how much of the language can be successfully processed and internalised at that time. Rather than the immediate accurate mastery of a linear progression of predetermined language exponents, what is expected in the progressivist approach is progress through various stages of language development, called 'interlanguages', each of which will contain errors in relation to usage by fluent background-speakers.

The progressivist approach to language teaching has as its major aim the promotion of the individual learner's general language development. This approach is designed to enable learners to widen their networks of interpersonal relations and their access to information. It lays stress on the need for school language learning to promote 'learning-how-to-learn skills', so that learners are able to make full use of whatever opportunities for living and working in other speech communities that might come their way.

Unlike reconstructionist practices, progressivist practices promote individual variation and tend not to lead learners towards predetermined goals and prespecified levels of performance.

Assessment techniques

Assessment in a progressivist approach is concerned with the learning process as well as with what different individuals achieve. It involves teachers and learners negotiating assignments and agreeing on the activities through which they are to be com-

pleted. Learners are encouraged to describe and evaluate the process that they undergo, and to reflect upon whether the learning strategies or activities adopted were effective. Thus, assessment covers not only cognitive aspects of learning but also invites learners to express how they feel about what they have been doing. As a result of reflecting on their learning experiences, they are expected to learn how to go about their learning tasks better (in other words, to 'learn how to learn').

Ideally, any report on learner progress in a progressivist approach would be a statement about an individual learner's achievements and how these had been attained. There would be no attempt to relate these achievements to any predetermined levels of performance nor to the achievements of other learners.

Disadvantages of the progressivist approach

The progressivist approach has not really been adequately researched in school settings other than in bilingual programs. In these, learners do seem to acquire an effective interlanguage, but one which may stabilise and cease to develop. This failure to progress in terms of grammatical development may occur quite early. According to Higgs (Higgs and Clifford 1982), it then seems difficult to eradicate the errors that have set in. While a progressivist approach undoubtedly has a major part to play in raising the individual learner's consciousness about learning and in promoting self-evaluation, an extreme version of the approach fails to provide the objective framework required for educational accountability and for research and general improvement. Equally importantly, it is unlikely to satisfy those teachers and learners who want a high level of direction and guidance in their work.

Teacher wisdom based on experience would indicate that in second language limited-exposure programs, neither the level of learner motivation, nor the restricted amount of exposure to the target language would permit the adoption of a progressivist approach to the exclusion of practices from the other two approaches. There is insufficient exposure to the target language in the progressivist approach to rely only on the process of spontaneous language acquisition which requires lengthy periods of gestation and frequent recycling of input. Recent research has indicated that in second language learning in the school situation there does appear to be a need for some deliberate intervention in the spontaneous learning process in the form of instruction and a deliberate focus on 'form' if any real progress is to be made (Pienemann and Johnson 1985, Long 1986).

The ALL Project proposal

As attempts to promote any one of the three approaches to the exclusion of insights from the others would seem unhelpful on the evidence available to us, it might be far more useful to attempt to reconcile the best aspects of each of the three approaches, and basing these on a set of carefully considered principles of teaching and learning, provide teachers of languages with a tool that they have hitherto felt the need for, but possibly lacked the time to formalise.

It would seem that a curriculum model that is to apply to school learners should attempt to embrace both the reconstructionist concern for broad social needs and interests, and the progressivist concern for the personal needs and interests of the individual. Since the latter are likely to vary from individual to individual as well as within individuals over time, there is clearly a limit to the extent to which learning outcomes and content can sensibly be prespecified, and the means to achieve them predetermined.

An appropriate balance needs to be achieved between catering for the objective needs of groups of learners to pursue common language learning goals on the one hand, and catering for the subjective needs of learners with their own personal aspirations, interests, and learning styles, on the other. There will no doubt tend to be a leaning towards predetermined common objectives in the earlier stages of a course, but as learners progress and become more responsible for the management of their own learning, so the emphasis should move in the other direction where learners have a greater say in determining the course of their own learning with the guidance of their teachers.

The ALL Project therefore proposes an approach to languages curriculum design in which *activities* (which integrate both syllabus content and method) provide the central experiential focus on language use. They are supported by *exercises* which provide the focus for deliberate learning. (A detailed discussion of activities and exercises appears in Book 2.) This proposal gives rise to a languages curriculum which includes:

- the experience of language in use through a range of communicative activities
- deliberate learning through focusing at appropriate times on elements of linguistic, conceptual, and social knowledge of various kinds, and on various skills and strategies
- common goals for all learners in a group at a particular Stage which reflect learners' common objective needs (the *Framework of Stages* is discussed in detail in Book 2)
- objectives and activities which reflect the subjective needs, aspirations, interests, and learning styles of individual learners
- continuous and end of Stage assessment procedures based on appropriate goals, and criteria for successful individual performance
- opportunities for learners to negotiate the objectives, assignments and activities, and for them to reflect on the learning process adopted and evaluate their own learning outcomes, so that they may learn how to learn.

Principles to Guide the Teaching/Learning Process

Having examined contemporary trends in curriculum development in languages and proposed an approach in the design of future curricula to encompass the best features of all contemporary approaches, it is now appropriate to consider the principles on which such curriculum decisions might be made.

Not enough is yet understood about school language learning for anyone to be able to lay down any hard and fast rules about how it is best promoted. What follows therefore is a set of principles which are based on practical experience, learning theory and language theory, common sense, and intuition. The principles are offered not as a panacea or recipe for instant success, but as a set of working hypotheses to guide curriculum renewal in languages, whether it is undertaken by classroom teachers, curriculum writers, or assessment authorities.

In the design of languages curriculum, it is important to consider both the objective and the subjective needs of learners. The term 'objective needs' refers to those needs which are agreed by consensus; 'subjective needs' refers to those evolving needs which are determined in response to the aspirations, interests, and learning styles of individual learners.

The principles proposed here are an attempt to respond to the objective and subjective needs of language learners. They reflect a concern with learners:

- who are users (or potential users) of the language that is being learnt
- who are not only learning a language but also learning how to learn a language
- who are unique individuals with their own personalities, needs, and interests, who possess a certain communicative background, a certain level of cognitive maturity and a certain level of emotional and attitudinal maturity in their relationships with other people, particularly people who are from different cultures or who speak different languages.

It is proposed that learners learn a language best when:

1. they are treated as individuals with their own needs and interests
2. they are provided with opportunities to participate in communicative use of the target language in a wide range of activities
3. they are exposed to communicative data which is comprehensible and relevant to their own needs and interests
4. they focus deliberately on various language forms, skills, and strategies in order to support the process of language acquisition
5. they are exposed to sociocultural data and direct experience of the culture(s) embedded within the target language
6. they become aware of the role and nature of language and of culture
7. they are provided with appropriate feedback about their progress
8. they are provided with opportunities to manage their own learning.

Each of these principles is examined below. Reference is also made to the implications that the principles might have on classroom teaching. These implications are explored further in the section on *Method* in Book 3.

Principle 1: Learners learn a language best when they are treated as individuals with their own needs and interests

Within any class, whether it be streamed or mixed ability, there will be a range of individual differences in terms of such factors as language background, interest in learning a language, ability and aptitude for language learning, cognitive, affective

and social maturity, and learning style. Teachers will need to take account of these differences when developing and implementing their teaching programs and will need to become familiar with strategies for teaching groups and coping with individual variations.

Differences in language background and language experience

There will be wide differences among learners in their first language experience and development, in terms of the level of language awareness that they have reached, and in terms of their experience of learning a second or subsequent language (if any). Teachers should aim to discover what stage of language development and language awareness learners have reached in both their first and subsequent language(s), and make this the starting point for future learning. (Characteristics which indicate learners' readiness for each of the ALL Project's proposed Stages, and influence the syllabus content of each Stage are outlined in Book 2).

It would seem from a number of studies (Carrol 1967, Pimsleur et al 1963, von Wittich 1962) that language development is dependent to a large extent on the quality of language use in the first language in the home. It would also appear that a growing language awareness, promoted either at home or at school by rhyming games, spelling games, grammar games, vocabulary games and other ways of playing with sounds, words, and meanings, is also important to healthy and rapid language development.

It has also been demonstrated that those who have already learnt a second language will tend to learn a third language more effectively than monolinguals who are tackling a second language for the first time.

Motivation

Individuals also differ in the extent to which they are motivated to learn a second language. Studies which examine the motivational patterns of school learners have established that in school language learning, motivation is best generated by a feeling of successful achievement (Clark 1967, Burstall 1975, Fairbairn and Pegolo 1983).

School learners seem to prefer a course which has an enriching mixture of communicative activities, formal work, cultural background, and literature.

Motivation is high in classrooms where there is an emphasis on language in use in a wide range of activities involving listening, speaking, reading, writing, and combinations of these skills in the target language, and where learners are given a sense of achievement according to their own perceptions of how well they would like to be able to perform.

Learning style

There are significant differences in the way that individuals learn. For example:

- ear-based learners prefer to learn by listening for information and, if possible, interacting with others
- eye-based learners prefer to learn by reading and studying in private
- field-dependent learners are heavily reliant on a context for the learning
- field-independent learners are more able to handle language items out of context and to transfer them to other situations, and they are also able to cope with ambiguity
- holistic learners are often risk takers who need room to experiment, and prefer to learn through tackling an activity as a whole and gradually getting better at it
- serialist learners are often cautious people who need guidance and reassurance, and prefer to have learning tasks broken down into component parts and to build up towards the whole.

Hosenfeld (1975) divides learners into three groups:

- low conceptual level learners (who require a great deal of support and structure)
- intermediate conceptual level learners (who require some structure)
- high conceptual level learners (who work best with less structure and thrive on taking responsibility for their learning).

Each of these groups requires a different amount of direction from the teacher.

Personality

There are also a number of personality variables that are said to affect the way in which people prefer to learn languages and the extent to which they may be successful.

Extroverts are willing to take risks and may benefit more from an approach that lays stress on their involvement in communication, while introverts may be more at home with a more form-focused approach that attempts to ensure accuracy before they communicate. Risk-takers may under-monitor their performance, while the more cautious learners may over-monitor it (Krashen 1981).

It is important for teachers to remember that oral communicative activities in the target language can be particularly stressful to learners. 'Conversations are special because they involve us in taking risks to our self-image and our status as members of a particular society.' (Di Pietro 1976).

Some learners will need more help than others in becoming risk-takers in conversation. Teachers need to be particularly careful as to how much error correction is done, and how this correction takes place. An atmosphere of trust where mistakes are expected and not ridiculed is essential.

Cognitive, social, and affective maturity

Teachers also need to be aware that learners of different ages and stages of cognitive maturity tend to think in different ways and have different ways of learning.

In the very early primary school years learners will learn best through being involved in spontaneous learning through experience. In later primary and early secondary school years learners will benefit from a mixture of experiential learning, reflection, deliberate learning, and awareness-raising. Most will require considerable contextual support in deriving and handling abstract rules.

Development of social and affective maturity is important in successful language learning. Group work, peer-monitoring, helping others to learn, and learning from them, all involve the use of social and affective skills. Many adolescent learners find it difficult to be confident in risk taking activities such as communicating in the target language, and will need a great deal of encouragement and a supportive atmosphere. Adolescence tends to be a time for looking inward; it is also a time of peer group conformity, of relative inhibition, and of a lack of self-confidence, none of which are conducive to communication in the target language.

The development of affective maturity in terms of learners' attitudes towards other cultures is also significant in the development of learners' empathy towards other cultures. Teachers will need to be aware that the experience that learners have of other socioeconomic groups and other cultural groups will vary enormously, and their level of affective maturity in this respect will do so too.

Summary

Individual differences such as those outlined above will affect many decisions teachers make when planning units and programs of work as well as the decisions they make spontaneously during lessons when responding to individual needs.

Suggestions for different ways of catering for learner differences are outlined in the section on *Method* in Book 3.

Principle 2:

Learners learn a language best when they are provided with opportunities to participate in communicative use of the target language in a wide range of activities

The more that learners try to use the target language, the more rapidly they will master it (Nelson 1973). Research evidence indicates that the amount of use that second language learners make of the target language is the most potent variable in determining the outcome of their learning (Carroll 1967). If the active working out of language is central to the learning process, then learners must be involved in generating utterances for themselves. Learners at all stages of language learning are able to engage in activities which will require them to use strategies to compensate for language which they have not yet mastered. When breakdowns in communication occur, learners can call on these strategies. Teachers can also focus on the language forms, skills, and strategies that learners need to assist them to communicate effectively before, during, or after an activity.

The term 'communicative use' refers to the active use of language for a purpose. This can be achieved by means of activities which may involve listening, speaking, reading, or writing, or combinations of these skills. Communication has to do with the negotiation of meaning between participants who are engaged in conversation or correspondence, or between a reader and a written text, or a listener and a spoken text. Thus, the term 'communicative use' refers not only to conversation, but also, for

example, to listening for information, listening for pleasure, reading for information, reading for pleasure, corresponding for business or for personal reasons, the employment of study skills, and engaging in various forms of project work involving combinations of many skills. The keys to communication are purpose, participants (who may or may not be present) and context. In order to judge whether a particular classroom activity is communicative or not, it is useful to ask a number of questions, to which the answer should normally be 'yes'.

- Is there a purpose to the activity?
- Are there participants? Is their relationship to one another clear? Or, if there are no participants, does the activity involve processing information from a spoken or written text?
- Is there an 'information gap' or an 'opinion gap' between the participants involved, or between the user and the spoken or written text? Is the speech or writing received or produced unpredictable? (A lot of predetermined role-play may look like communication, but it is not, if what is said is entirely predictable to the participants. A distinction needs to be made between 'acting out' where the script is determined in advance, and 'communicating' where the script is created by the participants as they proceed.)
- Does communication conform to the normal patterns and conventions of language use? (Dialogues, in which participants speak from a script, without really having to listen or adapt to each other, cannot be said to conform to the normal patterns of conversation.)

When learners engage in communicative experiences in a wide range of different contexts and for a wide range of purposes, they are able to:

- gain access to further relevant and comprehensible communicative data
- learn by experimenting, making mistakes, and trying again
- practise and subsequently use various communication skills (e.g. pronunciation skills, social skills, and the conventions of gesture, intonation, facial expression, etc.)
- develop an appropriate range of different registers (e.g. informal, transactional, private, public, and technical) so that they are able to quickly adapt their performance to the different contexts in which they might find themselves
- develop compensatory and repair strategies in order to sustain communication with background-speakers of the target language (e.g. ask for something to be repeated, indicate lack of understanding, etc.)
- experience feelings of confidence and success.

The ALL Project's concept of classroom language learning gives rise to a set of communication goals which are relevant to school language learning and which reflect the different dimensions of language use (see section which follows on *The Goals of Language Learning*). In order to assist learners to work towards the sorts of communication goals proposed by the Project, it is possible to create specific activities in the classroom to realise these goals. (See Book 2 for a discussion of the dimensions of language use and a definition of the term 'activity').

Any communicative activity may be a potential learning experience. Since those that attract the learner's interest are more effective than those that do not, it makes sense for the teacher to be able to draw upon a bank of inherently enriching activities which are known to motivate learners to participate actively in them. (See Book 2, *Appendix 2* for suggested activities for each Stage.)

It is important that learners have access to comprehensible communicative data which provides a model for language in use, and to the the language forms and rules necessary to carry out the communication activities.

Principle 3:

Learners learn a language best when they are exposed to communicative data which is comprehensible and relevant to their own needs and interests

All learning is a result of imposing meaning upon the data to which we are exposed in the environment. Learning a language is no exception. It involves learning the following:

- how to *act* in accordance with the sociocultural conventions of the target language speech community
- how to *mean* (i.e. how to interpret, express, and negotiate meanings, and combine them to create coherent text, according to the conventions of the target language community)
- how to *say* (i.e. which lexical and grammatical forms to use to express meanings)
- how to *sound* (i.e. which phonological and graphological forms to use in speech and in writing).

(Halliday 1973, 1975, 1976 and 1978)

In order to be able to use language, learners require exposure to comprehensible communicative data i.e. language used for a purpose, rather than just exposure to the particular grammatical structures, vocabulary, or functional/notional exponents of the language.

In much current classroom teaching, the data that is actually taught is too often regarded by the teacher (or the text book writer) as not having been learned unless the learner is able to regurgitate it almost immediately. It is believed that all language which has not been actively reproduced will automatically be forgotten. Because the role that is played by the receptive skills (reading and listening) in building up a learner's communicative capacity is sometimes underestimated, reading is often neglected, and listening is often reduced to no more than 'input-for-output' activity (e.g. listening comprehension). This means that much of what learners are asked to read or listen to is not real communicative data, but over-contrived in terms of syntax, and trivialised in terms of semantic content, so that it can immediately be regurgitated. Such data might be better viewed as potentially feeding an internal growth which can be capitalised upon later. Learners sometimes spend an excessive amount of time doing role-plays with each other and not enough time gaining access to further data from fluent background-speakers that will serve to extend their communicative capacity. It is important to ensure that a sufficient range of suitably graded written and spoken communicative data is made available in the classroom, on which the learners' spontaneous learning process can work.

Evidence from 'natural' or untutored learning suggests that learners acquire language from everyday communicative data which is not predetermined in terms of structures or functional/notional formulae. The untutored learner is exposed to random language, albeit kept simple in various ways by the background-speaker to ease the learner's burden. Over time, given motivation and communicative challenge, learners create their own systematic and ever-evolving communicative resource out of the random data provided. Their communicative resource gradually improves and expands, and approximates ever more closely to that of the fluent background-speaker. Very few second language learners ever achieve a communicative resource equal to that of a background-speaker's, but, given appropriate data and activities, learners can learn to communicate successfully. It seems sensible to heed the evidence that we have from untutored learning, and to accept that in order to be able to use language, learners require exposure to relevant and comprehensible communicative data. This is not to say that a deliberate focus at appropriate moments on structures, vocabulary, and particular functional/notional exponents is not necessary.

The problem facing the language teacher is to discover what type of exposure to language best promotes learning that will lead to an effective use of the target language. It is important to stress that the communicative data to which learners are exposed needs to be relevant or they will not attend to it. Such data also needs to be comprehensible; if we are unable to impose meaning on what we read or hear, we cannot process the data (i.e. we cannot internalise it in our long-term memory, so no learning is achieved). We retain only that which we have made meaningful, since it has personal significance for us, or that which we have worked at deliberately and effectively to make meaningful.

Where there is someone physically present communicating with us we also receive help from their gestures, facial expressions, body movements, intonation patterns, and other non-linguistic data. A written text, in which much of the non-verbal information has had to be encoded in punctuation, is not nearly so rich in support as intonation, gesture, pausing, emphasis, and facial expression.

When assisting learners to understand communicative data in the target language, it is important, therefore, to ensure that there is an adequate level of contextual support to aid them. It is also important to encourage learners to develop strategies to comprehend what they read and hear (as they do in their first language), such as prediction and the use of contextual clues.

A receptive capacity is likely to develop earlier than a productive capacity, and to remain ahead of it as learning proceeds. In the early stages of their learning, learners will be able to reproduce whole phrases or 'chunks' of language that can be recombined in various ways, but the gestation period required for them to process data and analyse it internally so that it can be reworked into novel utterances, takes time. That is not to say that opportunities should not be provided in the early stages for learners to engage in language use in activities. It is merely to point out that expectations of what will be achieved should be realistic and not overambitious.

Teachers need to be aware that:

- Learners will create their own ever-evolving communicative 'language resource' from the communicative data to which they are exposed. They will move gradually through stages of interlanguage development (which contain errors), towards the norms of fluent background-speakers (Selinker 1972).
- As learners' mental processes concentrate first and foremost on finding meaning, their attention will focus initially on the semantic content words and basic conceptual word order. The more redundant grammatical features will be attended to and internalised only when sufficient mental capacity is available to permit this to happen. This suggests that some deliberate focus on such matters will assist learners in the long run.
- Syntactic development appears to follow a fairly common path in all learners. The mastery of 'variational features', however, is more idiosyncratic, and depends on the extent to which learners wish to integrate into a target language community. (Refer to Johnson 1985, for further reading).
- Untutored learners tend to cease to develop the accuracy of their communicative resource at the point at which it satisfies their communicative and social requirements, though they may continue to acquire vocabulary from the communicative data to which they are exposed (Selinker 1972).
- In classroom learning situations, it is important for teachers to provide suitably graded communicative data designed at all times to challenge learners' existing communicative resources, and through this, to pressure them gently into expanding and improving it (Krashen 1981 and 1983).

There are many suggestions as to what sort of communicative data can be provided in the classroom. These are described in detail in the section on *Resources* in Book 3, and include such areas as teacher talk, other classroom talk, audio and video recordings, specially prepared written information, and realia and written texts from outside the classroom.

One of the teacher's major tasks in providing learners with communicative data that is both comprehensible and relevant, is to create the sort of conditions in which learners regard use of data in the target language as a natural and regular occurrence.

Principle 4: Learners learn a language best when they focus deliberately on various language forms, skills, and strategies in order to support the process of language acquisition

In the current climate, in which Krashen (1981, 1983) and some others are making optimistic claims for spontaneous learning in the classroom, it is important not to rush to the methodological extreme that they propose and promote spontaneous learning to the exclusion of all deliberate focuses on the various aspects that go to make up communicative ability. Recent studies (see Long 1983, 1985 for a review of the literature, and Ellis 1986) illustrate that formal instruction has a positive effect on acquisition processes, the rate of language acquisition, and the ultimate level of language attained, even though acquisition sequences cannot be altered. Evidence from researchers such as Pienemann (1984) and Johnson (1985) support these findings. They have identified certain 'stages' of language learning, through which all learners pass. The findings suggest that learners will learn certain aspects of language only

when they are ready to do so, and will not necessarily learn something simply because the teacher is teaching it.

There is a need for a deliberate focus on form, as well as on skills and compensatory strategies that will help the learner to cope with the inevitable lack of knowledge and breakdowns that will occur, and help bring about an effective communicative ability in the limited time available.

In the grammar/translation and audiolingual methods, the emphasis on deliberate learning became distorted to the point at which it tended to replace any concern with spontaneous learning from communicative data and communicative experience. It is towards a method in which deliberate learning is used as a necessary support for spontaneous classroom learning, and not as a replacement for it, that the ALL Project looks.

The classroom evidence emerging from the Graded Levels of Achievement in Foreign Language Learning (GLAFLL) Project in Scotland points to the need for the promotion of both spontaneous and deliberate learning (Clark 1987). Learners themselves certainly look for a deliberate focus on forms, skills, and strategies, as well as communicative experiences.

This is confirmed when we examine what Rubin (1979 and 1981) discovered about the learning experience of those who were found to be 'good learners'. They reported that learners adopted an immense variety of strategies, some concerned with seeking communicative data and experiences, others with deliberate learning through practice, and others with techniques designed to bring about conscious awareness and control. The list of strategies can be summarised as follows:

- requesting clarification
- monitoring of own and others' performance
- using a variety of mnemonic techniques for making semantic, visual, auditory and kinesic associations
- inductive inferencing (going from the whole to the parts), by using clues from the linguistic and non-linguistic context
- deductive reasoning (going from the parts to the whole), through a conscious awareness of patterns
- practice techniques (e.g. experimenting with new sounds, talking to oneself in the target language sub-vocally or aloud)
- using communication strategies to convey meaning (e.g. gesture, mime, paraphrase, etc).

There should be no expectation among teachers that systematic control of features of grammar which are redundant to the meaning of sentences will automatically be internalised by learners in the early stages of language learning as a result of exposure to relevant and comprehensible communicative data. This does not happen. Learners seem able to control such features only:

- if they have been deliberately taught, learnt, and remembered
- if there is sufficient time in the task that they are carrying out to call upon what they have deliberately learnt (i.e. if the task is a written one rather than one which calls for spontaneous speech)
- if it is correctness of form that is being concentrated on, rather than simply getting meaning across (Krashen 1983).

To supplement and support spontaneous or natural learning, a deliberate focus on various aspects of the knowledge, skills, and strategies that are required in the building up of a communicative resource is necessary:

- to make up for the reduced level of exposure in classroom language learning in the case of second language learners
- to assist the learner to develop as quickly as possible a communicative resource for use in a range of activities and contexts
- to build upon the learner's existing language awareness and capacity for deliberate learning
- to enable the learner to fall back upon the conscious, deliberately built-up knowledge of a language as a strategy to compensate for weaknesses in the available language resource
- to meet the learner's need for system information (vocabulary, pronunciation, discourse organisation, functions, notions, etc.).

There should be a series of deliberate and interlinked focuses on:

- pronunciation and spelling skills
- grammatical and lexical knowledge and skills
- semantic and discourse knowledge and skills
- compensatory and repair strategies to cope with ignorance and breakdown in communciation.

Conscious knowledge can act both as an initiator of what we say and write, and as a monitor of what we are about to do or have just done. The development of a self-monitoring capacity is an important part of any effective learning.

It is important to stress that conscious knowledge for its own sake is of little use as an end in itself, and that deliberate learning is useful only if it can be applied. It is through experience in the use of language that deliberately learnt knowledge can shift into and become part of that store of knowledge that is readily available to learners in their more spontaneous language use. Conscious knowledge and deliberate learning cannot therefore replace communicative experience, but can support it.

Principle 5:

Learners learn a language best when they are exposed to sociocultural data and direct experience of the culture(s) embedded within the target language

Languages are intimately and inextricably linked with the cultures which are embedded within them and of which they themselves are a part. Inherent within a language are cultural concepts which cannot be separated from the language itself.

An appreciation of these concepts can enable second language learners to develop an understanding of the culture of the target language community which they can compare with other cultures, thereby appreciating the validity of other ways of perceiving and encoding experience and of organising interpersonal relations. Learners are then able to relate to other cultures, and thus avail themselves of a whole range of potentially enriching experiences and reach a more secure acceptance of their own personal identity and value. Second language learners are able to develop positive attitudes towards the target language culture so that they might understand more about it as well as take advantage of any opportunities which arise to create friendships with members of the target language community, both within and beyond Australia. Suggestions as to how learners might achieve these goals are discussed in Book 2 (*Appendix 2*) and in the section on *Resources* in Book 3.

Principle 6:

Awareness of the role and nature of language

Learners learn a language best when they become aware of the role and nature of language and of culture

There exists a very wide variety of languages in use within and beyond the Australian community. Through an experience of learning at least one of these languages, and through guided reflection in the classroom about its role and its nature, the learner can build up language awareness. This is also fostered when there is a school policy which promotes a perspective of 'language across the curriculum'. It is hoped that through use of the *ALL Guidelines* school language departments will feel well placed to assist in the development of a general school language awareness policy. It will be useful for language teachers to discuss areas of common interest and concern with teachers of English and teachers in other subject areas so that the insights about the role and nature of language that are imparted to learners, as well as the terminology used, are complementary.

Clark and Hamilton (1984) suggest that awareness of language might usefully be fostered in the following areas:

- *Language as communication:* what language is; human communication as opposed to animal communication; different forms of human communication: codes, braille, sign language, etc; the human need for communication, and the function of language to carry information.
- *How a language grows:* language as a human creation, responsive to the needs and concerns of its speakers; language stability and language change; language families.

- *How languages affect each other:* loan words (words and expressions borrowed from other languages).
- *Language variety:* accents, dialects, styles, and registers related to people and their relationships, and to uses and contexts.
- *How languages affect human beings:* togetherness and divisiveness; prejudice related to geography, race, class, culture, etc.
- *How languages are learnt:* first language learning; strategies for learning a second or subsequent language.
- *Language as a system:* pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary; functions, notions, discourse organisation, etc.
- *Literacy:* the development of reading and writing; functional and expressive writing; literature.

Awareness of the role and nature of culture

Through experience of the various cultures with which they come into contact, and through guided reflection on this experience in the classroom, learners can be helped to develop a cultural awareness and a sensitivity that can lead to a greater understanding of diversity.

It is important for learners to realise that when people use language, they are engaging in a sociocultural activity. Everybody relates to language not only as individuals, but also as members of a sociocultural group. A good language program, therefore, should make learners aware of what culture is, and what it means for an individual to be a member of a particular sociocultural group.

All language learners in Australia, be they background-speakers or non-background-speakers, need to be made aware that they are dealing with different sets of sociocultural values and behaviour: those of English-speaking Australians, and those of a target language community (which might be based in Australia, or in the country of origin, or both).

Some learners who are developing their home language at school are likely to wish to learn to operate as full members both of the community whose language they are learning as well as of the wider Australian community. One of the roles of the language teacher is to assist learners to become critically aware of the way language relates to identity, so that they are able to operate comfortably within both communities without having to compromise their own identities as individuals.

Non-background-speakers, however, may be learning a second language in order to build a bridge between their own system of language and culture and that of the target language community. It is unlikely that these learners would ever want to lose their own cultural identity in order to assume that of the target language community, nor should they be encouraged to do so.

Principle 7: Learners learn a language best when they are provided with appropriate feedback about their progress

Awareness of progress is an incentive to further learning. In order to know whether progress is being made, learners need feedback that is sensitive to both their cognitive and emotional requirements.

It is important that learners know on what criteria their performance is being judged, whether on the basis of its communicative success, its strict appropriateness to context, its accuracy in formal terms, or on a combination of any or all of these. The feedback provided by the teacher should aim to be relevant to the type of activity in which the learner is engaged.

An assessment scheme is required which will assist teacher and learner(s) to monitor progress in both the 'process' as well as the 'product' of learning. Such a scheme should aim among other things to:

- monitor learners' language development
- monitor whether learners are learning what they are being taught, and whether they are able to perform communicative activities successfully at a level appropriate to their aspirations and apparent potential
- monitor the outcomes of learners' self-directed or group-directed assignments
- monitor the process by which learners are learning.

The assessment scheme should provide information to both teacher and learners, so that appropriate decisions are made as to how best to proceed. If stabilisation appears

to be occurring, emphasis may need to be placed on further communicative data and/or on a more deliberate focus on form. If deliberate learning appears to be proceeding, but little fluency is occurring, an increase in communicative experience may be required.

What is necessary is a differentiated approach towards handling error, which takes into account the nature of the activity being undertaken, the relative seriousness of the error made, the likely effect of correction on the learner, and the realistic expectations of long-term improvement as a result of any correction made. Current practice appears to suggest that in communicative activities, it is above all the truth and comprehensibility of the utterances that should be monitored; ambiguous or incomprehensible utterances should be verified, expanded, or reformulated for the learner.

It will often be useful for the teacher to make a note of common formal errors made in communicative work, in order to remedy them at an appropriate time. In lessons, when the focus is on particular forms, form-focused correction is necessary. It must be remembered that an accumulation of small errors may make a learner's utterances irritating for a background-speaker to have to listen to. While many errors may not appear to be important in themselves, in quantity they can reduce the overall comprehensibility of an utterance. Small errors in one context may give rise to semantic ambiguity in another. Learners should be made aware of this.

Learners can be encouraged to monitor each other's performance. They can learn a great deal from group correction sessions. This motivates and improves their monitoring capacity, and allows them to learn from each other. Another aim of such monitoring, is to encourage an appropriate level of self-monitoring. (Assessment is dealt with in detail in Book 3.)

Principle 8:

Learners learn a language best when they are provided with opportunities to manage their own learning

It is important that school language learning experiences equip learners with the insights and skills to manage their own learning, to go about further language learning, and to take full advantage of the various social, vocational, and leisure opportunities that come their way.

There is a notional scale in the promotion of learner responsibility, which runs from learning which is fully directed by the teacher to learning which is fully autonomous, with an infinite variety of practices involving choices of one sort or another in between. Learners may at times be made responsible for choosing to work alone or to work with others, to accept responsibility for finding appropriate materials or to ask for teacher guidance, to evaluate their own efforts or be evaluated by the teacher, to pursue their own objectives or to follow an agreed common set of objectives. How far one wishes to travel along the road towards learner autonomy in any particular area will depend upon a variety of factors, such as the particular learning context with all its possibilities and constraints, the value currently placed in the educational system on learner responsibility, the age and experience in responsibility-taking among learners, the availability of appropriate resources and equipment, the physical layout of the classroom, the willingness of the learners to take responsibility, and the willingness of the individual teacher to give up certain aspects of authority.

At school level, it would seem that working towards some level of learner responsibility is dependent upon teachers having an attitude of mind which is sensitive to the educational advantages of promoting responsibility in the classroom, and of responding to individual differences, developing needs, and changing wishes, while still guiding learners in the general direction of externally agreed common goals.

Teachers who see their learners as responsible people, capable of taking responsibility and of exercising imagination in the solving of problems, and who provide opportunities for this tend to find that their learners come to act accordingly.

Negotiation, in which both teacher and learners have something to say, would seem to be the key to the sharing of responsibility. It is the teacher's particular task to secure agreement that the common goals of language learning are worth working towards, and it is the learners' particular task to ensure that their own needs, aspirations, and interests are being catered for. Thus, teachers need to make explicit what they wish to attain, and learners should be encouraged to make their wishes known.

Teachers need to develop their skills of negotiation and to help learners to develop negotiation skills. This can be done over time, and skills can develop from simply listening to learners' reactions and understanding their perceived needs, to negotiating in a more explicit way, in a manner which will have an effect on the whole teaching/learning process. (Additional information on negotiation is provided in the *Method* section of Book 3.)

The Goals of Language Learning

School language learning is designed to provide school learners with a learning experience of a broad educational nature, together with a general communicative base in the target language.

The ALL Project proposes that together with all other subjects in the school curriculum, school language learning should aim to promote the individual's cognitive, social, and affective development.

Language development involves learning how to acquire and handle concepts and through this how to act upon the world and relate to others. It is thus inextricably linked to both cognitive and social development. Language development is crucial to the acquisition of information, to the recording and conveying of it, to reflection, to interpersonal communication, and to the inner life of the imagination. Language learning can contribute to the development of competencies in all of these areas, and is thus a major contributor to the general development of the learner. There is a place in languages education for:

- the promotion of generalisable cognitive skills
- the promotion of socially useful communication skills
- the promotion of the individual learner's own language development in response to changing needs and aspirations
- the fostering of learners' responsibility in managing learning, and in learning how to learn
- the fostering of positive attitudes towards other languages and cultures and towards learning generally
- the provision of a range of enriching experiences, and a more secure acceptance by learners of their own personal identity and value as individuals.

The development of goals

During its conceptualisation stage the ALL Project conducted consultations with a range of educational personnel, including classroom teachers, school principals, advisers and consultants, and curriculum developers regarding their views on appropriate goals for language programs. Information was also drawn from surveys of student opinion, particularly that of Fairbairn and Pegolo in Queensland (1983). This survey indicated clearly that what learners look for in a language course is a wide range of communicative activities involving listening, speaking, and reading, and to a rather lesser extent, writing in the target language. Learners also look for a focus on cultural content, literature, and grammar. A survey by Clark in the UK (1979) produced very similar results and showed that school learners wish to engage in a wide variety of activities reflecting not only the world of the adult, but also that of their own age-group.

All languages encode the way in which reality is perceived and organised by a particular speech community, and the way in which interpersonal relations are structured within it. Since different languages reflect different cultures, therefore, it needs to be remembered that a general communicative base for one particular language will not necessarily cover the same range of contexts, activities, and meanings as a communicative base in another language. The contexts in which languages are used and the activities that are engaged in will vary from one culture to another. A general communicative base in an Aboriginal language, an Asian language, and a language of European origin cannot, therefore, be exactly the same. In addition to this, it is necessary to take into account that school language learning in Australia will be undertaken both by learners developing their home language, and those learning the target language as a second language.

It is important, therefore, to ensure that the languages curriculum is tailored to reflect the differences in the way the various target language communities use language, and to ensure that the needs of different categories of learners are adequately provided for.

The broad categories of goals that follow represent a general consensus as to what school language learning should set out to achieve. Each broad category will apply to all Stages and all languages, though it is likely that at different Stages there will be different emphases within categories.

Broad categories of goals

The ALL Project has identified five broad categories of goals that are relevant to all language programs at all Stages of language learning:

- communication goals
- sociocultural goals
- learning-how-to-learn goals
- language and cultural awareness goals
- general knowledge goals

These broad categories of goals should not be viewed as discrete, but as being always integrated with each other. Because of the nature of language learning, however, it is expected that the communication goals will predominate in the vast majority of programs. Each broad category is described in turn.

Communication

The following is a list of communication goals which are relevant to all languages at all Stages. Syllabus writers and teachers will determine the emphasis which will be given to each of them at different Stages.

Broad goal statement: **By participating in activities organised around use of the target language, learners will acquire communication skills in the target language, in order that they may widen their networks of interpersonal relations, have direct access to information in the target language, and use their language skills for study, vocational, and leisure-based purposes.**

Learners will aim to be able to use the target language to:

- establish and maintain relationships and discuss topics of interest e.g. through the exchange of information, ideas, opinions, attitudes, feelings, experiences, and plans
- participate in social interaction related to solving a problem, making arrangements, making decisions with others, and transacting to obtain goods, services, and public information
- obtain information by searching for specific details in a spoken or written text, and then process and use the information obtained
- obtain information by listening to or reading a spoken or written text as a whole, and then process and use the information obtained
- give information in spoken or written form e.g. give a talk, write an essay or a set of instructions
- listen to, read or view, and respond personally to a stimulus e.g. a story, play, film, song, poem, picture
- be involved in spoken or written personal expression e.g. create a story, dramatic episode, poem, play.

Sociocultural

The following is a list of suggested sociocultural goals from which syllabus writers and teachers can select and adapt the specific goals that are relevant to their particular language and the learners at the particular Stage(s) for which they are writing. Other relevant sociocultural goals can be added.

Broad goal statement: **Learners will develop an understanding of the culture of the target language community, which they can use as a basis for informed comparison with other cultures. Through this process learners will develop an appreciation of the validity of different ways of perceiving and encoding experience and of organising interpersonal relations, and reach a more secure acceptance of their own personal identity and value.**

Through the sociocultural goals learners should gain the following insights about the target language community:

- an understanding of how interpersonal relations are conducted
- an understanding of the everyday life patterns of their contemporary age-group (including life at home, at school, and at leisure)
- some insight into its cultural traditions
- some knowledge of its historical roots and its relationship to other communities
- some knowledge of its economy and the world of work
- an understanding of its political and social institutions
- an understanding of its cultural achievements
- some knowledge of its current affairs.

It is hoped that these goals will enable learners to understand more about the target language culture, to develop positive attitudes towards it, and take advantage of opportunities offered for personal involvement.

Learning-how-to-learn

The concept of encouraging learners to take responsibility for their own learning is explored in the discussion of Principle 8 in this book and in the section on *Method* in Book 3.

Broad goal statement: **Learners will be able to take a growing responsibility for the management of their own learning, so that they learn how to learn, and how to learn a language.**

Learners should develop:

- cognitive processing skills (to enable them to understand and express ideas, values, attitudes, and feelings; to process information, and to think and respond creatively)
- learning-how-to-learn skills (to enable them to take responsibility for their own learning)
- communication strategies (to enable them to sustain communication in the target language).

Learning-how-to-learn goals can be elaborated into skills and strategies. Lists of suggested cognitive processing skills, learning-how-to-learn skills, and communication strategies are provided in *Appendix 1*, Book 2.

Language and cultural awareness

The following is a list of suggested language and cultural awareness goals from which syllabus writers and teachers can select and/or adapt the specific goals that are relevant to their particular language and the learners at the particular Stage(s) for which they are developing syllabuses and programs. Other relevant language and cultural awareness goals can be added.

Broad goal statement: **Learners will reflect upon and develop an awareness of the role and nature of language and of culture in everyday life, so that they may understand the diversity of the world around them, and act upon it in judicious ways.**

Through the language and cultural awareness goals, learners will develop an understanding of:

- the aesthetic features in their own language and in the language of others
- the functions of language in everyday life (e.g. the various ways that language is used to achieve what the speaker wants; the way that language is used to show levels of politeness, anger, etc.)
- the systematic nature of language and of the way it works (e.g. that patterns exist in language; that language parts can be analysed and named, etc.)
- the way that language adapts to context (e.g. individual speakers will adapt their language according to who they are with — be it with friends or an important person, in a group, or with a speaker of another language, or where they are — be it at a formal meeting, at school, etc.)
- the concepts of accent, dialect, register, and other forms of language variation
- how language grows, borrows, changes, falls into disuse, and dies
- how language is learnt (both as a first and as a second language)
- how language is a manifestation of culture
- cultural variation and the enriching nature of diversity
- the importance of language maintenance to members of a particular speech community

General knowledge

These goals refer to the subject matter of activities. Since they relate to the needs, interests, and aspirations of particular groups of learners, specific goals in this broad category are best determined by syllabus writers or by teachers.

Broad goal statement: **Learners will gain knowledge and understanding of a range of subject matter related to their needs, interests, and aspirations, as well as to other areas of their formal learning.**

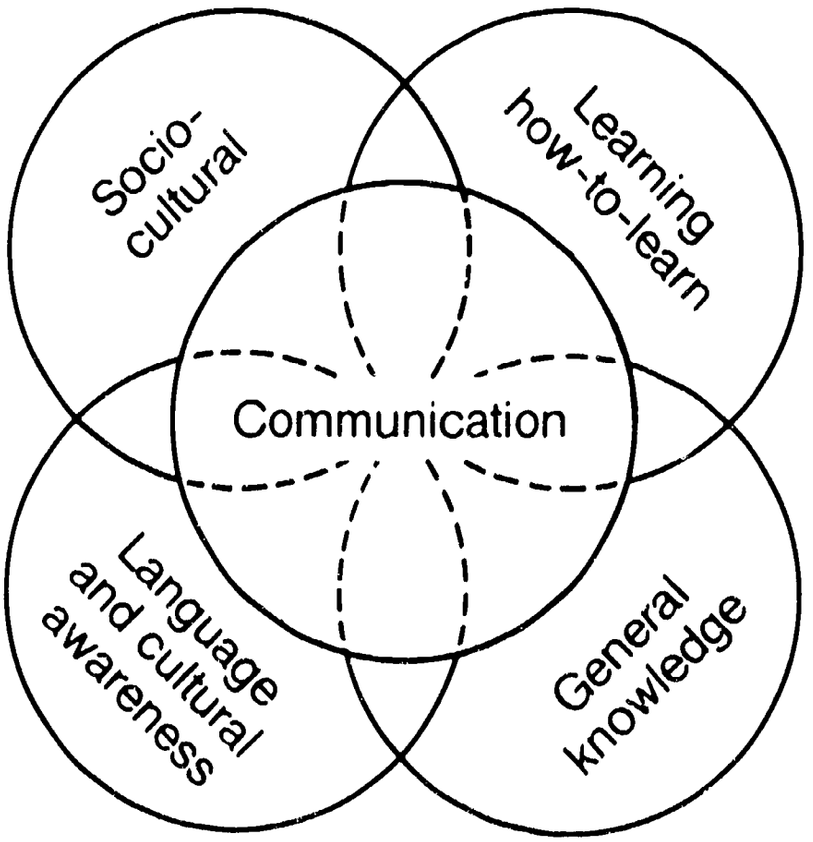
General knowledge goals apply to all language programs to varying degrees. A bilingual or an ESL program, for example, might use the target language as a vehicle by which to learn other subject matter (e.g. science, social studies, etc.).

The integration of goals

The communication goals are fundamental to the ALL Project's concept of language learning. The other goals (sociocultural, language and cultural awareness, learning-how-to-learn, and general knowledge) are seen as being integrated with the communication goals, and may be achieved through the same activities which are designed to help learners achieve the communication goals. Because these goals are fundamental in planning activities, it is communication activities categorised into activity-types which form the organisational base for syllabus design, programming, and assessment in the ALL model at all Stages. This process is described in detail in Book 2, and the *Assessment* section of Book 3.

Suggestions for activities appropriate for each Stage to assist in the achievement of objectives derived from these broad goals are outlined in *Appendix 2* of Book 2.

The integration of goals



The Framework of Stages

The Stage concept

The mechanism proposed by the ALL Project for the organisation of language programs is a framework of progressive, interlocking, and age-related Stages which are applicable to the teaching of all languages in Australia. Learner characteristics influencing syllabus content at different stages are outlined in *Learner characteristics influencing syllabus content at different Stages* in Book 2. A statement of suggested syllabus content for each Stage is provided in *Appendix 2* of Book 2. The Framework of Stages provides both school administrators and language teachers with an outline of the ways in which the syllabuses for individual Stages may be linked to create describable pathways along which learners may proceed as their cognitive and language development and experience of the target language increase.

Individual Stages are broadly related to the age and the approximate level of schooling of groups of learners; it would be inappropriate, for example, for beginners whose ages might range from six years to sixteen years to all be included in the same learning group. The Stages are designed to cater for learners who begin the study of a language spoken at home, or a second or subsequent language, at any time during their school career. The syllabus content (goals, objectives, and activities), and method for each Stage will reflect the nature and interests of the learners at that Stage.

This is not to imply that the content, and method for a particular Stage in one language will necessarily be identical to that for the same Stage in another language. Content will vary not only because of sociocultural factors, but also because of differences among languages (the writing system associated with languages that do not use the Roman alphabet, for example, can pose special problems for many Australian learners, which might make it necessary in such languages to modify the demands made by reading and writing skills in the early Stages in particular).

The Framework of Stages describes five broad age levels: junior primary, middle primary, upper primary/junior secondary, middle secondary, and senior secondary. Individual Stages are described in terms of the syllabus content which is appropriate for these different age levels, and the kinds of learning activities through which knowledge, skills, and strategies may be developed at each level.

Within each of these broad age groupings it is possible to have both beginning and continuing learners. Provision has been made, therefore, for a beginners' Stage at each of the broad age groupings and for a variety of continuation Stages to cater for learners who are at different points in their language development. However, it is clear that a beginners' Stage for young primary learners will require different content and processes from a beginners' Stage for secondary learners whose general language development as well as their cognitive and affective maturity will be different.

The rationale for Stages

The Framework of Stages provides a common frame of reference for language teaching and learning which is able to reconcile to some extent the differences that exist between schools, systems, states/territories, and between languages themselves. These differences often give rise to certain administrative and educational problems which can reduce the effectiveness of language programs. In seeking to address concerns in the following areas, it is hoped that the Framework will prove advantageous to learners, teachers, and administrators alike:

- transition and portability
- multiple entry and exit points
- short-term objectives
- differences in the language background of learners
- administrative convenience

Transition and portability

Planning for learners' transition from one year level to the next, from one Stage to the next, from primary school to secondary school, and even from one school to another, can often prove problematic. As a result of the present range of teaching practices and approaches to programming, even among schools in the same district, learners moving from one school to another are often faced with the problem of discontinuity in their language learning.

The Framework of Stages proposed by the ALL Project is designed to provide schools enrolling learners with prior experience of a language with information as to the Stage they have reached. This will enable the placement of learners into appropriate classes, and will help to provide continuity in language learning. In addition, the Framework of Stages can assist teachers faced with mixed ability or vertically grouped classes with a mechanism for identifying the various groups of learners that might exist within the one class.

The Framework of Stages is designed to facilitate continuity of learning for individual learners not only within but also between schools and systems. (Currently, the only indication of how much progress learners have made, is the number of chapters they have covered in their particular textbook; if they work without a textbook, it is extremely difficult to judge how much they have progressed.) Where the *ALL Guidelines* (either the broad curriculum guidelines, or the language-specific guidelines which are derived from them) are adopted by individual schools or educational systems, there will be an important degree of similarity between the goals and processes developed by schools or systems for any one Stage in a particular language. The common frame of reference will describe the Stage that learners have reached according to a common system. At the same time, the *ALL Guidelines* remain sufficiently flexible to allow for differences within individual classrooms (for example, the different viewpoints and practices of individual teachers, and the particular interests and aspirations of various groups of learners) to be reflected in language-specific and group-specific syllabuses based on the *ALL Guidelines*.

Multiple entry and exit points

The learning of a second or subsequent language can begin, and development of a learner's home language can continue at a variety of points at both primary and secondary level. At present, however, language programs tend to be planned in 'lock-step' sequences which seldom have more than one entry point. The Framework of Stages is designed to offer learners achievable transitional and terminal targets, and to allow multiple entry points into and exit points from language learning. Adoption of the Framework will hopefully overcome the difficulty that currently exists with regard to the very limited number of initial entry points into language learning and the lack of provision for learners to resume learning a second language after having earlier abandoned it. Learners resuming their study after a break may re-enter the Framework at any Stage which is commensurate to their age, cognitive and language development, previous experience, and ability in the target language.

Short-term objectives

Current language programs tend to offer learners long-term objectives, achievable usually only at the end of year 12. Such objectives are unrealistic for the vast majority of Australian school language learners who, for a variety of reasons, do not pursue their language learning to this stage. The individual Stages are designed to provide learners, teachers, and schools with a clearer concept of the learning objectives which are appropriate at different times. In order to maintain motivation, they will provide learners with attainable short-term objectives towards which they may work at their own rate. It is expected that individual Stages will each cover a period of approximately 2–3 years at primary level, and 1–2 years at secondary level, given adequate time and frequency of exposure; they will give teachers a clearer indication of the language learning objectives which apply at different Stages; they will provide school administrations with a mechanism for placing learners in appropriate groupings; and they will represent a useful way of demonstrating to parents and the wider community what is being learnt at any particular time.

Differences in the language background of learners

The Framework of Stages also takes into consideration the differences in learners' language background. Currently, there exists no mechanism for identifying what individual learners bring with them to their language learning. Learners who have prior experience of the target language will bring to their learning some experience of the language and its cultural referents which is not available to those who do not have a home background in the language, and will need to start from a different point. In

addition, learners with a home background in the language will obviously have a far greater opportunity to use the language outside the classroom than non-background learners. This is a factor which needs to be carefully considered by schools in organising language programs if they are to ensure maximum progress for all learners. A large group of learners beginning secondary school, for instance, and all wishing to learn the same language, could well contain a range of learners ready to begin at any one of Stages 1, 2 or 3. The Framework of Stages is designed to provide schools with a mechanism for identifying what Stage(s) these learners have reached. Placement tests to diagnose the Stage that learners have reached in their development in the target language will need to be devised to assist in this process.

Administrative convenience

The proposed Stages represent a principled method of dividing the learning continuum for any language into administratively convenient slices. At the same time, however, it is important to realise that individual Stages cannot be related in any neat and tidy way to periods of time (such as school terms or school years). Since learners will inevitably attain the goals and objectives of a particular Stage at different rates, allowance should be made for learners to move between the Stages related to their broad age-group.

Learners are deemed to be ready to proceed to the next Stage, when they are able to successfully complete the kinds of activities, and are able to deal with the kind of content which is set out in the previous Stage. (Suggested goals, objectives, activities, and checklists of specific content for individual Stages are outlined in *Appendix 2* of Book 2. Likely characteristics of learners' performance at each Stage are outlined in the *Assessment* section of Book 3).

Conclusion

This book has outlined the current context of language teaching and learning in Australia. It has described the place of languages in the school curriculum, provided a definition of what is meant by the languages curriculum by means of a curriculum 'jigsaw', and examined recent trends in approaches to language learning.

Given the complexities of the context, it puts forward the ALL Project's proposal for a common approach to the teaching and learning of languages in Australia, which is designed to coordinate the expertise of language educators across the country and to respond to some of the issues which currently exist. A learner-centred, activities-based approach to language learning is proposed, based on a set of principles to guide the teaching/learning process and a set of goals which are common to all language learners and all languages. An organisational framework is also outlined, which would allow for commonality and portability across all states and territories.

Book 2 elaborates on each of these major features. It deals in particular with the syllabus piece of the curriculum jigsaw, suggesting possible content for syllabuses at different Stages, and describing procedures for the planning of both syllabuses and classroom programs.

Books 3 and 4 cover the remaining pieces of the jigsaw. Book 3 deals with the questions of method, resources, and assessment, and provides advice for teachers in each of these interrelated areas. Book 4 underlines the fact that none of the above ought to be viewed as static, but that the curriculum as well as the professional expertise of those who put it into practice are in a state of constant development.

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